

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

**Parkston School District  
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2003-2004**

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**Dates of On Site Visit:** February 19 and 20, 2004

**Date of Report:** March 6, 2004

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This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by the Special Education Programs. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

<b>Promising Practice</b>	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
<b>Meets Requirements</b>	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
<b>Needs Improvement</b>	The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.
<b>Out of Compliance</b>	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
<b>Not applicable</b>	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

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<b>Principle 1 – General Supervision</b>
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General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

**Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- Parkston Advance
- Parkston School District Comprehensive Plan
- Newspaper Clippings
- Preschool screening

- Interagency agreements,

### **Meets requirements**

The steering committee reported the district has procedures in place and is meeting the requirements of child find. In regard to the district's referral procedures, the district has implemented the comprehensive plan, which contains all of the necessary components of a comprehensive referral process.

The steering committee stated the Parkston School District does not have any private schools within the district nor does it have any students enrolled in private schools.

The steering committee reported all children are included in the statewide assessment program. The goals and objectives for each student are aligned with content standards, which are aligned with the statewide standards and assessments.

The steering committee stated there have been no long-term suspension or expulsions and as a result, there is no need to revise policy, procedures, and practice.

The steering committee noted 100% of the staff is fully certified, training is provided when needed, both certified and non-certified staff is supervised by certified staff. The school district has in place, a plan to evaluate all certified personnel. Furthermore, training is provided to all district staff as individuals or supervisors identify priorities.

## **Validation Results**

### **Promising practice**

#### **CBM data collection**

Curriculum based measurement is a method of collecting data through assessment in the areas of reading and math. The Parkston school district uses the data to determine automaticity of skills in reading and math for each student.

Curriculum based measurement measures basic skills, student growth or rate of progress. It provides for decisions to make based upon factual data, indicates automaticity, monitors student movement through the curriculum and is a way to collect data of what is happening in the classroom.

Probes are a random selection of works a student may encounter throughout the school years, conducted in reading and math weekly to students in grades kindergarten through fourth grade and biweekly in grades five and six. They are one minute long in reading and one to five minutes in math, depending on the grade level.

Rate of growth varies in relationship to age and grade level. This method measures student progress and the trend of the scores. Graphing gives teachers, students and parents a visual picture of student progress, indicates successful methods of interventions, provides for continual monitoring and assists with student assistant team and special education referrals.

Teachers, parents and students can discuss and gain more information about what is happening in the learning process. Graphs are easier to understand than letter grades or percentages. Progress can be checked anytime.

### **Business book Buddies**

The Parkston school district has developed a program, for grades K-2, where children and their parents attend an evening session and learn how to work with their children on different reading strategies. These events are based on a theme such as Halloween or the firehouse. Community involvement became a

primary goal. The district worked hard to get the students excited about attending the upcoming event. However, the students could not attend if they did not bring a parent with them.

The second grade teachers and the reading specialist decided this would be their academic goal for the year. The first step was to network locally and the district decided that the events would take place four times a year. The second step would be to determine who would be the first “Business Partner”. The business partner is important because they provide funds to cover book costs, and refreshments for the evening.

The third step was setting the theme. The theme for the first event was developed around the football season. The football coaches and cheerleading advisors worked with on the event. It provided an opportunity for children to work with players and cheerleaders in a different atmosphere. Books and refreshments all were related to the theme of the event. Scheduling a place to carry out the activity was the next step in the process.

The next step was the kickoff in the K-2 classrooms. The cheerleader dressed in their uniforms and visited each classroom, performing cheers based on reading and handed out a personal invitation to each student. The invitation read like a recruitment letter to a prospective athlete. The parents were instructed to call the “athletic director” (the school secretary) to RSVP. The note also informed parents the football players and cheerleaders would read to the “Little Trojans” (students) while the parents went off to the “locker room” (classroom) for some tips by the “coaches” (teachers).

Approximately 40 minutes was spent reading to the children and also sharing information with parents. Following snack, the students picked out their book to take home to keep. The goal of the program is to give parents the resources they need to help their children learn at home.

### **Early Childhood Programs**

The Parkston school district has developed and implemented early childhood program options for all students. Special needs students are integrated into these available options.

1. **Beginnergarten:** This program is offered to students who are age 5 by September 1 of the current year. These are students whose parents initially decided to hold back from starting Kindergarten due to academic reasons or social readiness. These students attend five mornings a week.
2. **Pre-school:** This inclusive program is offered to students who are age four by September 1 of the current year. It benefits all students in preparing for the kindergarten program. Students can go from pre-school to Beginnergarten, but this decision is left up to the parents. The fee is \$45.00 a month, which includes the snack. These students attend two half-days a week. The schedule is Monday -Wednesday morning, Tuesday-Thursday morning or Tuesday Thursday afternoon.
3. **Head Start:** Through and interagency agreement developed between Parkston School District and South Central Child Development, Inc., this program is currently being offered in our community, but primarily in the participant’s homes. There are certain guidelines that need to be adhered to, but this has been a fantastic partnership. This particular program serves children ages 3 to school age. The students attend on Monday-Wednesday mornings.

### **After School Program (homework priority)**

This after school study hall is provided to Kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade on Tuesday and Thursday until 4:30PM. The students are provided a snack before beginning the program. The students are divided into three groups K-2-3 and 4-6. First grade was in a group by themselves. Some students may work

independently. A parent or teacher refers the student. The purpose of the after school program is to assist students in completing their homework. There are several certified staff and high school students working as assistants. Even though homework is a priority, other activities are available (games, flash cards and reading).

### **Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee data for Principle One, General Supervision as meeting the requirements with the exception of the issue identified under “Out of Compliance”.

### **Out of compliance**

#### ARSD 24:05:17: 03 Annual report of children served

The district does not have documentation to verify services were being provided to one student listed on the district’s 2002 child count. Interviews also confirmed there was not an IEP in effect on December 2, 2002 for this student. The Department of Education will withhold from the district the Individual with Disability Act (IDEA) federal funds for the misclassified student.

## **Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education**

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- Parkston School District budget
- File reviews
- Student surveys
- Parent surveys
- Staff surveys
- State data tables
- Comprehensive plan
- Administrative special education file,

### **Meets requirements**

The steering committee stated the budget indicates that revenue has been earmarked for the provision of services. In all files reviewed, all of the related services were addressed and provided.

The steering committee reported training is provided to administrators as to meet the requirements of the law and furthermore, no special needs students have been suspended or expelled for more than 10 days.

### **Validation Results**

### **Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting the requirements for free appropriate public education as concluded by the steering committee.



A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- Parkston School District policy manual
- File reviews
- Student surveys
- Parent surveys
- Staff surveys
- State data tables
- Comprehensive plan
- Administrative special education file,

#### **Meets requirements**

According to the steering committee, files reviewed where evaluation results were available, the steering committee reported 100% of the students were evaluated in the area of the suspected disability. Furthermore, qualified personnel conduct the evaluations, a multidisciplinary team determines if the child had a disability according to the SD eligibility guide and determines if the child requires services.

The steering committee state information provided in the data statements on page 15-16 of the comprehensive plan indicates the evaluation or reevaluation procedures and instruments meet the minimum requirements. Upon completing the administration of tests and other evaluation materials as required by chapter 24:05:25, the individual education program team and other individuals required by § 24:05:25:04:02 shall determine whether the student is a student with a disability.

Of the 18 files reviewed, the steering committee reported 15 indicated that a copy of the evaluation report was provided to the parent. Of the files for “Our Home” students, the steering committee is unable to determine if the parent or guardian did or did not receive a copy of the evaluation.

Of the parents surveyed, 14 of 15 agreed that they did receive copies of the evaluation results. All available evaluations indicate that comprehensive evaluations with knowledgeable staff are conducted with parental input.

Of the 18 files reviewed, determination was made that eight of the files were re-evaluations. Of these eight files, all were completed in the three-year timelines.

Prior notice indicates the purpose is to meet federal guidelines, determine eligibility, and to determine needs if the student qualifies. After spot-checking eight student files of students who were dismissed each dismissal was based upon evaluation results and classroom performance.

#### **Needs improvement**

The steering committee reports the district has been unable to track down or locate files for students placed in “Our Home”.

## **Validation Results**

### **Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting the requirements for appropriate evaluation as concluded by the steering committee, with the exception of the issues identified under “Out of Compliance”.

### **Needs Improvement**

Refer to areas identified as Out of Compliance under Principle One, general supervision.

### **Out of Compliance**

#### **ARSD 24:05:22:03 Certified child**

A certified child is a child in need of special education or special education and related services who has received a multidisciplinary evaluation and has an individual education program formulated and approved by a local placement committee. Documentation supporting a child’s disabling condition as defined by Part B of the Individual with Disabilities Education Act must be maintained by the school district for verification of its annual federal child count. This definition applies to all eligible children ages 3-21 inclusive, and to only those children under the age of 3 who are in need of prolonged assistance.

A student listed on the child count as emotionally disturbed must be reevaluated to determine eligibility under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The student transferred from Abbott House in Mitchell and is currently placed at “Our Home”. The only evaluation available is an achievement test using the Woodcock Johnson-Revised dated 4-11-03.

A student listed on the child count as other health impaired must be reevaluated in the area of achievement as only a developmental test was administered. The child’s birthdate is 11-3-96. The current evaluation report includes an intelligence test, motor test, speech and language and a developmental test. The team must meet following completion of achievement testing to consider educational impact and eligibility.

A student listed on the child count as specific learning disability did not qualify for special education and related services as determined by the eligibility guidelines for South Dakota. However, the team decided to complete the IEP team override form. The team must document why standards and procedures used with the majority of students resulted in invalid findings for this student. The monitoring team determined the answer to this question was incomplete.

#### **ARSD 24:05:25:04.03 Determination of eligibility**

The IEP team must meet to determine eligibility for a student placed on the child count as a specific learning disability. The child does not qualify as learning disabled however, there is information available in the file which suggests the student may qualify as other health impaired. The file refers to medical information but it is not currently in the student file. The team must consider all information and determine the appropriate disability category.

#### **ARSD 24:05:25:04 Evaluation procedures**

The evaluation team must consider a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional and developmental information about the child, including information provided by the parents. Through the review of fifteen student records, the monitoring team found the district staff gathers data from classroom teachers to use as functional information in the evaluation process. During interviews, special education staff reported a lack of understanding concerning gathering and reporting functional assessment. The monitoring team noted a written summary of functional information was not

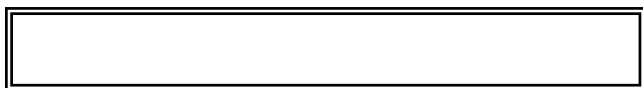
consistently included in the evaluation report or in the present levels of performance. The students' present levels of academic performance, their progress in the general curriculum and the development of annual goals and short-term instructional therefore did not link to evaluation.

#### ARSD 24:05:25:06 Reevaluations

#### ARSD 24:05:27:01.03 Transition services

Transition services are a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. The coordinated set of activities shall be based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests, and shall include instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post school adult living objectives, and if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

Through review of nine files and staff interviews, the monitoring team noted transition evaluations were not administered prior to age 16 to assist in developing transition services and activities. District staff stated they knew assessment was necessary, however, were unsure of how to proceed.



Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- Parkston South Dakota policy manual
- File reviews
- Student surveys
- Parent surveys
- Staff surveys
- State data tables
- Comprehensive plan
- Administrative special education file

#### **Meets requirements**

The steering committee noted the data supports the requirement under IDEA that parents are informed of their parental rights. The district has in place, procedures as stated in the comprehensive plan that provides and meets the requirements of surrogate parents. Parents are notified of all relevant information for which consent is being sought in their native language.

The steering committee noted the information found in the district's Family Education Rights and Privacy Act policy and comprehensive plan. The district does provide the parents of a child in need of special education or special education and related services with the opportunity to inspect and review all educational records concerning the identification, evaluation, and educational placement of the child and the provision of a free appropriate public education.

According to data table “L” the district has had no complaints during the past three years. Both the comprehensive plan and the parental rights brochure address the complaint process.

The steering committee reported the district policies and procedures are in place for responding to requests of due process and are located in the comprehensive plan or parental rights document. District policies and procedures are in place for responding to requests of due process and are located in the comprehensive plan or parental rights document.

## **Validation Results**

### **Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements for procedural safeguards as noted by the steering committee.



The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

## **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- Parkston South Dakota policy manual
- File reviews
- Student surveys
- Parent surveys
- Staff surveys
- State data tables
- Comprehensive plan
- Administrative special education file

### **Meets requirements**

The steering committee noted the information reviewed affirms that the IEP team requirements and other identified responsibilities are met as outlined in the comprehensive plan.

Of the files and information reviewed, written notice is provided for all IEP meetings and includes all required content. The information reviewed affirms the district does ensure that all required content is contained within the IEP document.

The documentation reviewed maintains that the transition plan for students are a coordinated set of appropriate or applicable activities based on transition delivery. The information and documentation above ensures that appropriate development of each eligible student’s IEP is in place and effective.

## **Validation Results**

### **Meets requirements**



The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee data for Principle Five, Individualized Education Program as meeting requirements, except in the area of IEP content. See information under out of compliance.

### **Out of compliance**

#### ARSD 24:05:27:01.03 Content of individualized education program

A student's IEP must contain present levels of performance based upon the skill areas affected by the student's identified disability. The present levels of performance are based upon the functional assessment information gathered during the comprehensive evaluation process. In 15 of 22 student files reviewed by the monitoring team, present levels of performance were not linked to functional evaluation and did not contain skill-based strengths, needs or how the disability affects the child's involvement and progress in the general curriculum.

#### ARSD 24:05:27:13:02 Transition Services

Transition services are a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post-school activities. The coordinated set of activities shall be based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests, and shall include instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post school adult living objectives, and if appropriate, the acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

In five student files, no transition information was provided in the present levels of performance. In addition, a transition plan was not written to address the five transition areas on the IEP. Special education staff mentioned transition activities provided such as career assessment, Catch the Wave, Youth Leadership, Vocational Rehabilitation and connections with Lewis and Clark Behavioral Health however, these activities are not documented on the student IEP.



After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- Parkston School District policy manual
- File reviews
- Student surveys
- Parent surveys
- Staff surveys
- State data tables
- Comprehensive plan
- Administrative special education file

### **Meets requirements**

From survey data collected and a review of IEP documents, the steering committee reported all children receive services in their least restrictive environment and have support access where required or

beneficial. Furthermore, the least restrictive environment is also addressed on pages 47-51 of the district comprehensive plan.

### **Validation Result**

#### **Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements for least restrictive environment as noted by the steering committee.